

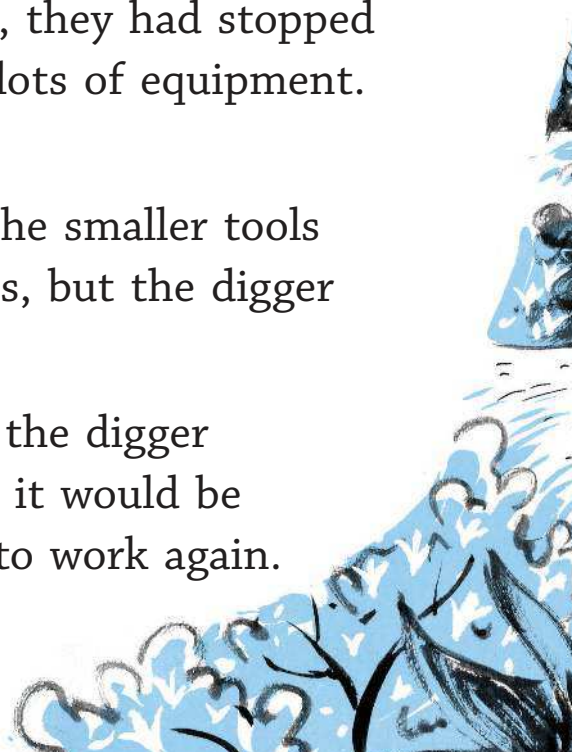
CHAPTER 1

THE OLD DIGGER

Many years ago, a boy called Dak lived in a tiny village many miles from any city. When Dak was a very small child, workmen from the city had come to build a dam near the village so that there would be enough water for crops. They had also started to build a big road so that people in the village could get to towns and cities easily. But one day, without explanation, they had stopped working and left, leaving behind lots of equipment. They had even left a digger.

Over time, people took some of the smaller tools to use in their homes and gardens, but the digger stayed, getting older and rustier.

Dak often stopped and looked at the digger as he walked by. He thought that it would be a good thing if it could be made to work again.



‘If we got it working, we could sell it and raise money for the village. We could even build a new school,’ he would say to people as they passed.

But the older villagers would shake their heads.

‘That digger hasn’t moved since before you were born,’ they told Dak. ‘It has been here for years and years and no doubt will be here for years to come.’



But Dak was sure he could get it working.

‘I’m good with my hands,’ he said. ‘I built my bicycle out of spare parts.’

The villagers all laughed.

‘Building a bicycle isn’t the same as getting a big and rusty old digger working again,’ one of the elders said. ‘You have to know how an engine works. And the gears.’

‘I can read about it,’ said Dak. He showed them a manual he’d found in the cab of the digger. It was old and stained, but it had pictures of the moving parts and diagrams of how they worked.

‘You’ll be wasting your time,’ said the elder. ‘That digger will never work again.’

The only one who didn’t try to discourage Dak was his Uncle Riv. He was Dak’s mother’s brother and he had a business in the city. Dak’s father had died two years before, and Uncle Riv often came back to the small village to see his family. He listened to Dak’s plan for the digger.



‘I don’t know anything about diggers,’ Uncle Riv told Dak. ‘But I know you. You have a good attitude, Dak. If anyone can get that digger going, it’s you. But you won’t be able to do it on your own. For something as big as that, you’ll need help.’

‘Will you help me?’ asked Dak.

Uncle Riv shook his head.

‘I’m very busy in the city. But, if you can get it working, I’ll do what I can to help you sell it. I know some business people who may want to buy it.’